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IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

- 1. Inspection of Underground Site
- 2. Agreed Framework
- 3. Perry's Visit to DPRK
- 4. DPRK Famine
- 6. Mysterious Balloons in Japan
- 7. US-PRC Relations
- 8. PRC Reaction to Embassy Bombing
- 9. Alleged PRC Espionage
- 10. Taiwan Military
- 11. Taiwanese Theater Missile Defense

II. Republic of Korea

- 1. ROK's View on DPRK
- 2. Inspection of Underground Site
- 3. Hyundai-DPRK Economic Cooperation
- 4. US Forces in ROK
- 5. ROK's Plan to Buy Russian Subs

III. People's Republic of China

- 1. Perry's Visit to DPRK
- 2. ROK Cabinet Reshuffle
- 3. Bombing of PRC Embassy
- 4. Across-Taiwan Strait Relations
- 5. PRC Access to WTO

I. United States

1. Inspection of Underground Site

Reuters ("U.S. TEAM REACHES SUSPECT NORTH KOREAN SITE," Washington, 05/20/99) reported that a team of US experts on Thursday visited a DPRK underground construction site to determine whether it is nuclear-related. An unnamed State Department official said, "They began their work and the cooperation they are getting seems to be good." He added that the team could stay at the Kumchangri site for some days, and that the US does not expect a detailed report until they leave the country.

The US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations issued the following press release ("STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN BENJAMIN GILMAN OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE VISIT TO KUMCHANG-NI," Washington, 05/20/99): "The Kumchang-ni visit is not the success story the Administration has been playing it up to be. The need for a visit to Kumchang-ni is actually a failure- -- a failure of the Agreed Framework to have appropriate means of verification for the agreement; a failure to keep North Korea from pursuing a nuclear weapons program; and the failure of North Korea to keep its end of the Agreed Framework. The significance of this event is further diminished by the $180 million in food aid the United States gave to North Korea for entrance to this sure to be empty facility. Are we going to have to cough up $200 million every time we find a suspicious North Korean site that may violate the Agreed Framework? The Agreed Framework is no model of modern arms control and we are sure to pass this way again with Pyongyang. The question is what will the price be next time?"

2. Agreed Framework

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING," Washington, USIA text, 05/19/99) said that US access to the underground site at Kumchangri demonstrates the effectiveness of the Agreed Framework. Rubin stated, "That is the responsible way to handle the non- proliferation problem -- by stopping it, rather than risking its escalation by throwing away an agreement that we believe greatly serves our national interests." He added, "Now, there are some in Congress who've never liked this agreement.... We would obviously work with them to the extent that any concerns they have were concerns that we share. But to the extent that the motivation of any legislation would be to destroy an agreement that we think has advanced the national interest of the United States, and certainly our allies Japan, and South Korea believe had advanced their interests." [Ed. note: NAPSNet will be issuing a Special Report later today on pending congressional legislation regarding the DPRK.]

3. Perry's Visit to DPRK

Associated Press (David Briscoe, "U.S. MONITORS TO VISIT N.KOREA SITE," Washington, 05/20/99) and Reuters ("CLINTON ADVISER PERRY TO VISIT N.KOREA IN LATE MAY," Washington, 05/20/99) reported that the White House announced Thursday that former Defense Secretary William Perry will lead a team of US officials between May 25 and 28 to assess progress in relations with the DPRK. The White House announcement on the visit by Perry, a presidential adviser on DPRK issues, said he would be accompanied by Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman, counselor of the State Department, and a "small team of U.S. officials." The announcement said that the visit is intended to assess views of the DPRK first-hand. It was not immediately clear whether Perry and his group would have any contact with the team inspecting an underground construction site at Kumchangri.

4. DPRK Famine

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA FIGHTING FOOD SHORTAGE," Pyongyang, 05/20/99) reported that the DPRK granted access to a Western reporter accompanying European, US and Australian aid groups on a week-long tour. The journalist provided a transcript of the interview with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Choi Su-hon to news agencies. While Choi conceded that the DPRK faced great food shortages, he said that it had avoided massive starvation. Choi added that DPRK nationals "are convinced that the difficulties are temporary." Choi said international aid has been "very effective" in alleviating the DPRK's hardships and has made "a great contribution to peace and stability in the Korean peninsula." Choi said that aside from encouraging the breeding of grass-eating animals, including goats and rabbits, the DPRK is stepping up the farming of potatoes, both as a principal crop and a subsidiary crop on land that has already been harvested. He added that double-cropping also is being applied to more than 247,000 acres of land. Choi said that the government is also seeking to increase the area of arable land, making it easier to farm with machinery and improve soil fertility. He said that floods and natural disasters cost an estimated US$17 billion in damage in just 1995 and 1996. The DPRK harvested just 2.6 million tons of food in 1997, which is one-third of its needs. He said that the harvest in 1998 was little more than 3 million tons, compared with the 7.8 million tons needed to feed its 23 million people.

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA STARTS RABBIT CAMPAIGN," Tokyo, 05/19/99) reported that Radiopress in Tokyo said that the DPRK is encouraging people to raise rabbits as a source of food. The DPRK's Rodong Shimmun newspaper reported in its May 9 edition, "We should thoroughly learn about rabbits and make rabbit raising a national movement." According to Rodong Shimmun, a rabbit can produce more than 4.4 pounds of "delicious" meat in three months, and since it would also produce up to 30 baby rabbits, the rabbit will be able to produce some 110 pounds of meat.

6. Mysterious Balloons in Japan

Reuters ("FLOCK OF MYSTERY BALLOONS PUZZLES POLICE," Tokyo, 05/19/99) reported that more than 20 mysterious balloons were found across a wide range of coastal and inland central Japanese towns on May 18 and 19. A police spokesman in the central Japanese town of Fuji said that four deflated balloons found caught in trees and telephone wires appeared to each be attached to a small box containing two batteries and two empty white plastic containers. He said, "We do not know what the purpose of these could be." There was nothing found with the balloons to indicate their origin. There was a similar incident in 1997, with balloons believed to have been made in the DPRK, but police declined to speculate this time. "This is nothing particularly noteworthy," said one police spokesman in Ishikawa.

7. US-PRC Relations

Reuters (Scott Hillis, "CHINA PROVINCE COURTS U.S. BUSINESS AFTER DISPUTE," Los Angeles, 05/19/99) reported that for the first time since NATO's bombing of PRC's embassy in Belgrade, a Chinese trade delegation of 150 business and government leaders from Jiangsu province visited the US. The province's governor and his deputy did not make the trip as scheduled. Ye Jian, director-general of Jiangsu's Economic Relations and Foreign Trade Commission, stated, "The governor, lieutenant governor and myself have been very dismayed at the incident committed by U.S.-led NATO. But I deal with the economy and trade, so I must come." He added, "Our arrival signals that our policy of opening up to the outside world has not changed. We want to develop friendly cooperation with American entrepreneurs and people, and develop more trade and investment. This has not changed."

Reuters ("U.S. SEES TRADE TALKS WITH CHINA RESUMING SOON," Washington, 05/19/99) reported that US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said in an interview with CNBC on Wednesday that trade talks with the PRC will resume soon. Barshefsky said that it was important that the talks get back on track to try to improve strained US-PRC relations. She stated, "I do believe China wishes to move forward with respect to WTO entry. It has evidenced publicly in its very recent statement its continued desire to accede to the WTO in 1999. That necessarily means a negotiating schedule that resumes in the not too distant future."

The Associated Press ("BEIJING EMBASSY RESUMING VISA WORK," Beijing, 05/20/99) reported that a statement was released saying that the US Embassy in Beijing and US consulates in southern and eastern PRC will resume non- immigrant visa services next week. However, non-immigrant visa services "are suspended indefinitely" at the US consulate in southwest Chengdu city, where protesters set fire to the consul's home.

8. PRC Reaction to Embassy Bombing

South China Morning Post (Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "ARMY HAWKS MIMIC ANTI-NATO SENTIMENT," Hong Kong, 05/19/99) reported that elements within the PRC leadership have continued to urge a tough stance against the US and its allies in the wake of the NATO strike on the PRC Embassy in Belgrade. An unnamed Beijing source confirmed that the PRC Navy sent at least 10 vessels to the vicinity of the disputed Diaoyu Islands last week in a show of force against the "hegemonists." The source said that the PRC leadership feared that the US might use US-Japan security guidelines to intervene in the affairs of Taiwan, considered by some PRC politicians as a "potential Kosovo." People's Liberation Army (PLA) officers have proposed test-firing advanced-model missiles, military exercises along the coast, and a revival of nuclear tests in the Xinjiang region. The Politburo has yet to endorse the suggestions. However, even under these circumstances, the PRC authorities decided to launch commercial satellites three days after the embassy bombing to demonstrate the PLA's grasp of rocket technology. A Western diplomat said: "Army hawks have taken heart from the show of patriotism following the embassy incident. They are confident that, given the imperative of preventing Taiwan independence, the PLA will have stronger public support for a more aggressive modernization program." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 19.]

9. Alleged PRC Espionage

The Wall Street Journal (John J. Fialka, "CHINA GAINED ACCESS TO WIDER RANGE OF MILITARY SECRETS, HOUSE REPORT SAYS, 05/20/99) and the Associated Press (H. Josef Hebert, "REPORT SAYS US SECRETS HELPED CHINA," Washington, 05/20/99) reported that a report by a US House of Representatives select committee headed by Representative Christopher Cox (R-California) said that the PRC gained access to a broader range of US military-related secrets than had been previously suspected. According to the report, the PRC has been able to make substantial gains in modernizing its nuclear weapons program because of US secrets obtained through espionage and misuse of legally obtained technology. The report also said that Hughes Electronics Corporation and Loral Space and Communications Company knew that they were violating licensing rules barring the transfer of militarily sensitive technology to the PRC when they sent satellites to be launched there. The report also said that the PRC has obtained some design information on electromagnetic-gun technology derived from a large research program, sponsored by the US Army, to explore possible development of a new artillery system using electrical energy and magnetism to propel artillery and antitank shells at very high velocity. The report concluded that there is little question that the PRC has obtained critical information about a number of US warheads through theft from US nuclear

weapons laboratories as well as scanning of publicly available information.

10. Taiwan Military

South China Morning Post ("PRESIDENT REVIEWS WAR MACHINE," Hong Kong, 05/19/99) reported that Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui on Wednesday reviewed Taiwan's restructured army units on islands close to the PRC as they completed military drills. Dozens of US-made M60-A3 tanks, anti-tank missiles, armored personnel vehicles, rockets, and cannons for an armored brigade were on display at the Wuteh base on Penghu island. Lee stated, "I have been deeply impressed by the aviation and armored infantry brigades. Today's review of weaponry and personnel once more shows the muscle of the newly formed combined brigades." Under new reforms, the Taiwan Army is to be cut from 450,000 troops to 400,000 by June next year. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 19.]

11. Taiwanese Theater Missile Defense

The Richmond Times carried an analytical article (John Hall, "TAIWAN DWELLS IN DIPLOMATIC SHADOWLAND," Taipei, 05/20/99) which said that the US is pressuring Taiwan into joining a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system." Dr. Joseph Wu of the Institute of International Relations at National Chengchi University was quoted as saying, "We are seeing a different kind of attitude in Washington." He said that while Taiwan does not want to be excluded from a regional missile defense system because of Chinese pressure, it is not ready to pay a huge amount of money for the project. Dr. Andrew N.D. Yang of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies said that the US military-industrial complex is "trying to sell us a lot of nice shiny toys." He added that that US pressure for a TMD is an unnecessary provocation of the PRC. He stated, "After all, the people here, not the United States, have to face the Chinese response." He argued that Taiwan should spend its resources on improving fighter aircraft and air defense instead. Yang speculated that if the PRC wanted to attack Taiwan, it would do so suddenly without a buildup beforehand. He stated, "Escalating only gives China disadvantages." He added that the deployment of US aircraft carriers in the Taiwan Straits in 1996 was important "in demonstrating that we are not alone and isolated. It will cause Beijing to think twice before invading." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 20.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK's View on DPRK

Korea Herald ("HONG OPTIMISTIC NK WILL POSITIVELY RESPOND TO PACKAGE PEACE DEAL," Seoul, 05/19/99) reported that ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Hong Soon-young said Tuesday that he is optimistic about the DPRK's eventual acceptance of a package peace deal agreed upon by ROK, US and Japan. "I have a cautious optimism that North Korea will respond positively to the comprehensive deal jointly worked out by South Korea, the United States and Japan," Hong said upon returning home from his week-long US visit. In Washington, he fine-tuned with US officials the contents of the package deal. "Pyongyang's behaviors have changed a lot since 1994, when North Korea and United States reached a landmark accord," the foreign minister said. Hong said that he is paying close attention to the DPRK's compliance with the four-party peace talks. "Given North Korea's economic difficulties and isolation, it is expected to comply with the deal this time, too."

2. Inspection of Underground Site

JoongAng Ilbo ("NO EVIDENCE OF NUKES AT KUMCHANGRI, SEOUL SAYS," Seoul, 05/19/99) reported that the ROK government is likely to draft a friendlier policy towards the DPRK as it believes that there is no evidence to prove the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons around Kumchangri. A source from the government said that it made the judgment even though the US inspection team is not scheduled to conduct its inspection until May 20. The ROK government seems prepared to make concrete economic proposals to support the DPRK. The ROK is still urging the DPRK to accept the ROK's comprehensive engagement policy. The US State Department said that the inspection team will stay around Kumchangri to completely confirm the suspected facilities are for the construction of a nuclear reactor and not for the storage of plutonium.

3. Hyundai-DPRK Economic Cooperation

JoongAng Ilbo ("HYUNDAI TO BUILD ROOFING TILE FACTORY NEAR MT. KUMGANG," Seoul, 05/19/99) reported that the Hyundai group this year is going to build a roofing tile factory around Mt. Kumkang and supply tiles to be produced for housing improvements in the DPRK. At the same time, Hyundai and the DPRK are actively considering establishing a joint computer assembly line in the DPRK. A top-ranking official at the Hyundai Group said on May 19 that Hyundai plans to send its economic cooperation team to the DPRK and to hold final negotiations on building a roofing tile factory. Hyundai decided to transfer its tile factory in the ROK to the DPRK because of the many houses and buildings to be constructed near Mt. Kumkang. Meanwhile, the DPRK reportedly is going to allot land for a computer assembly line that will cost an estimated US$1.5 million.

4. US Forces in ROK

Korea Times ("US DEPLOYS F-15E SQUADRON TO SET UP DEFENSE READINESS," Seoul, 05/19/99) reported that the US Air Force on Tuesday deployed 12 F-15E aircraft to the ROK to step up its defense readiness on the Korean peninsula in light of the US aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk's redeployment due to the Kosovo crisis. Twelve aircraft of the first batch of 18 from the 90th fighter squadron at Elmendorf Air Force base in Alaska arrived at Kwangju air base Tuesday afternoon. The remaining six will arrive in the ROK later, the US Forces Korea said, without specifying the date of the arrival. "The unit, part of the Third Wing, Elmendorf AFB, will conduct a variety of training events and activities while in South Korea,'' the USFK said. The 18 F-15E aircraft will be the second US reinforcement unit since the Kitty Hawk's departure April 6. The US Air Force also sent AC-130 gunships to ROK in the wake of the Kitty Hawk's departure.

5. ROK's Plan to Buy Russian Subs

Korea Times ("SEOUL SET TO BUY RUSSIAN SUBS," Seoul, 05/19/99) reported that the ROK has reached a tentative decision to buy Russian submarines in order to help improve its ties with Russia and resolve the debt repayment problem. However, the Navy protested the decision, arguing that the incumbent government will be responsible for all problems that should arise after the introduction of Russian submarines, whose potential performance is in question. A Defense Ministry spokesman on Tuesday told reporters that the ROK is leaning toward accepting several Russian submarines. "President Kim Dae-jung will convey his affirmative thought on the deal to his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin during his May 27-30 visit. But the final decision will be made after Navy experts inspect Russia's Kilo-class subs in detail,'' the spokesman said. Although the spokesman said that the final decision has yet to be reached, analysts say it will be hard for the ROK to back down

after informing Russia of its willingness to buy the submarines. Military experts accused the government of reaching the decision out of mere political and economic considerations. President Kim Dae-jung, in particular, is known to be very supportive of the purchase of Russian submarines in the hope that the deal will significantly improve ties between the ROK and Russia, which have been strained since a spy scandal involving an ROK diplomat.

III. People's Republic of China

1. Perry's Visit to DPRK

China Daily ("PERRY VISIT TO DPRK DISCUSSED," 5/20/99, A11) reported that the DPRK and the US are negotiating the details of a visit to Pyongyang by former US defense secretary William Perry, ROK Foreign Minister Hong Soon-young said on May 19. Hong, returning from a visit to Washington, told reporters that a high-level meeting between the ROK, the US, and Japan will be held in June following Perry's visit to the DPRK.

2. ROK Cabinet Reshuffle

China Daily ("SOUTH KOREA TO REPLACE MINISTERS," Seoul, 5/19/99, A11) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung will reshuffle his cabinet after his return from a visit to Russia and Mongolia, ROK presidential spokesman Park Jie-won said on May 18. Following his return, Kim will consult with Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil to decide the timing and scope of the cabinet reshuffle, said the spokesman. The reshuffle is designed to replace ministers who plan to run in the parliamentary election slated for April. President Kim is expected to appoint career officials and experts, rather than politicians, to be ministers.

3. Bombing of PRC Embassy

People's Daily ("CLINTON PHONES TO APOLOGIZE," Beijing, 5/15/99, A1) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin held a telephone conversation with US President Bill Clinton on the night of May 15 at the latter's request. Clinton said he wished to express his sincere apology for the tragedy that had occurred in Belgrade and his personal condolences to the families of those killed in the attack and to those injured. He guaranteed that the cause of the incident would be investigated and that the Chinese would be told the result at an early date. Clinton emphasized that PRC-US relations are very important and that he will make the utmost effort to deal with the "tragedy" and bring bilateral relations back to the normal track. PRC President Jiang Zemin said he has taken note of the further apology made by the president just now, adding that the PRC Government has solemnly expressed its stance and clearly stated its demands in various statements and representations. Jiang emphasized that the US-led NATO's missile attack on the embassy was a serious incident that has shocked the world. It has led to a great number of casualties and the destruction of the embassy building, severely infringed the PRC's sovereignty and grossly trampled on the UN Charter and the basic norms of international relations. The attack on the embassy has severely hurt the national feelings of the Chinese people, he said. He stressed that the US-led NATO must bear full responsibility for the incident. He said he hoped the US Government would fully realize the seriousness of the incident, which has already harmed Sino-US relations. "We have always emphasized the improvement and development of bilateral relations," Jiang said. "The key is to closely observe the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, in particular, the principle of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity," Jiang said. In conclusion, Jiang pointed out that it is

now urgent for the US Government to launch a complete, thorough and fair investigation of the incident and publish the results immediately so as to satisfy all the demands of the Chinese Government and people.

China Daily ("SURVEY: EMBASSY BOMBING INTENTIONAL," 5/20/99, A3) reported that NATO faces a serious credibility problem in the PRC when the organization says that the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was a mistake. The report said that in a recent telephone survey of 800 urban Chinese, no one believed that the missile attack on the embassy was a "tragic mistake" as NATO had explained. The Beijing Youth Daily reported on May 19 that people think that the explanations given by NATO are contradictory. The newspaper and a polling company called 413 families in Beijing and 418 families in Shanghai from May 14 to 16. About 5 percent of the respondents had attended anti-US demonstrations and 11 percent had attended a wide variety of gatherings denouncing NATO's "atrocity." People offered many explanations why NATO had bombed the embassy, the report said. Forty percent of the people said NATO's intention was to test the PRC's reaction. Fourteen percent said that NATO aimed at silencing the PRC's opposition to the Bombing of Yugoslavia. Another 16 percent said the US was bullying countries which dared to say no to the only superpower in the world. Seven percent said that the US was showing off its power. Six percent of the people said that the US was so arrogant that it had gone crazy. US popularity among Chinese citizens dropped by 24 percentage points after the bombing, said the newspaper, without giving the original figure. However, if NATO satisfied the demands of the PRC Government of giving a formal apology and conducting a thorough investigation into the issue, the popularity might regain 8 percentage points, the poll indicated.

4. Across-Taiwan Strait Relations

People's Daily ("FM SPOKESMAN ANSWERS QUESTIONS," Beijing, 5/19/99, A4) reported that when commenting on the rejection by the 52nd World Health Assembly of a proposal to admit Taiwan as an observer of the annual conference, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said on May 18 that the PRC firmly opposes the Taiwan authorities using health as an excuse to engage in political activities splitting the motherland. He said that the refusal again foiled Taiwan's attempt to create "two Chinas" or "one China and one Taiwan" in the World Health Organization.

5. PRC Access to WTO

People's Daily ("MINISTER RESTATES WTO STANCE," Beijing, 5/18/99, A4) reported that PRC Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng said at the Ninth Sino-Australian Joint Ministerial Economic Commission Meeting on May 17 that the PRC's position on World Trade Organization (WTO) accession has never changed. Shi said that the PRC insists on the balance of rights and obligations. As a developing Country, Shi said, the PRC can only commit to obligations suitable to its economic strength. The PRC's accession to the WTO will be beneficial both to the PRC and the WTO, as well as to the development of world trade, Shi said. However, he said, the PRC will never sacrifice its fundamental interests to gain membership. According to the minister, the PRC has noticed that the trade ministers from the US, Japan, Canada, and the European Union agreed recently in Tokyo that they would work to bring the PRC into the WTO by the end of this year. However, he said "concrete actions are more important than statement". Shi said, "I heard from foreign media coverage that they (the PRC's major WTO negotiation partners) have a bottom line in their requests to China, and I would also like to tell them that there is an ultimate limitation on what China can offer. We will never go beyond that maximum ceiling in making our commitment."

China Daily ("FRANCE, GERMANY SUPPORT WTO ENTRY," Paris, 5/20/99, A1) reported that

French President Jacques Chirac said on May 18 that France firmly supports the PRC's efforts to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) and he hoped that the PRC could enter the WTO before the end of the year. In a joint communique with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder released by the Elysee presidential palace, Chirac said that France and Germany have taken note of the efforts already made by the PRC to create the conditions necessary for its admission to the WTO. The two leaders said that France and Germany are ready to press within the Europe Union (EU) for PRC entry into the WTO, so that the PRC can continue to support constructive solutions to international trade solutions and better balance the interests of all countries.

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